GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:710
ANSWERED ON:26.02.2001
DEVELOPMENT OF ADIVASI REGIONS
MANSUKHBHAI D. VASAVA

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the work related to development and providing facilities in the Adivasi regions have been stopped due to the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government so far in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS(SHRI T. R. BAALU)

(a) to (c) No Sir. The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 does not prohibit use of forest land for any non-forestry activity. However, prior approval of the Central Government is required for the purpose. In the last 20 years since the enactment of the legislation more than 6000 developmental proposals involving about 4.94 lakh hectares of forest land, which are pre-dominantly in Adivasi areas, have been accorded approval. Moreover, while diverting any forest land for any non-forestry activities under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, due consideration is given to the likely adverse impact of the project on the local people particularly the tribals.

In order to expedite clearances of proposals related to specific development and providing facilities in the Adivasi regions which may include roads, drinking water supply scheme, transmission lines, schools, dispensaries, etc. and where the requirement of forest land does not exceed 5 hectare, the powers have been delegated to the six Regional Offices to decide the cases within 4 weeks, if the proposal is complete in all respects.